Principle and Conversation

Necessary Preparation

TO THE

World's Dissolution

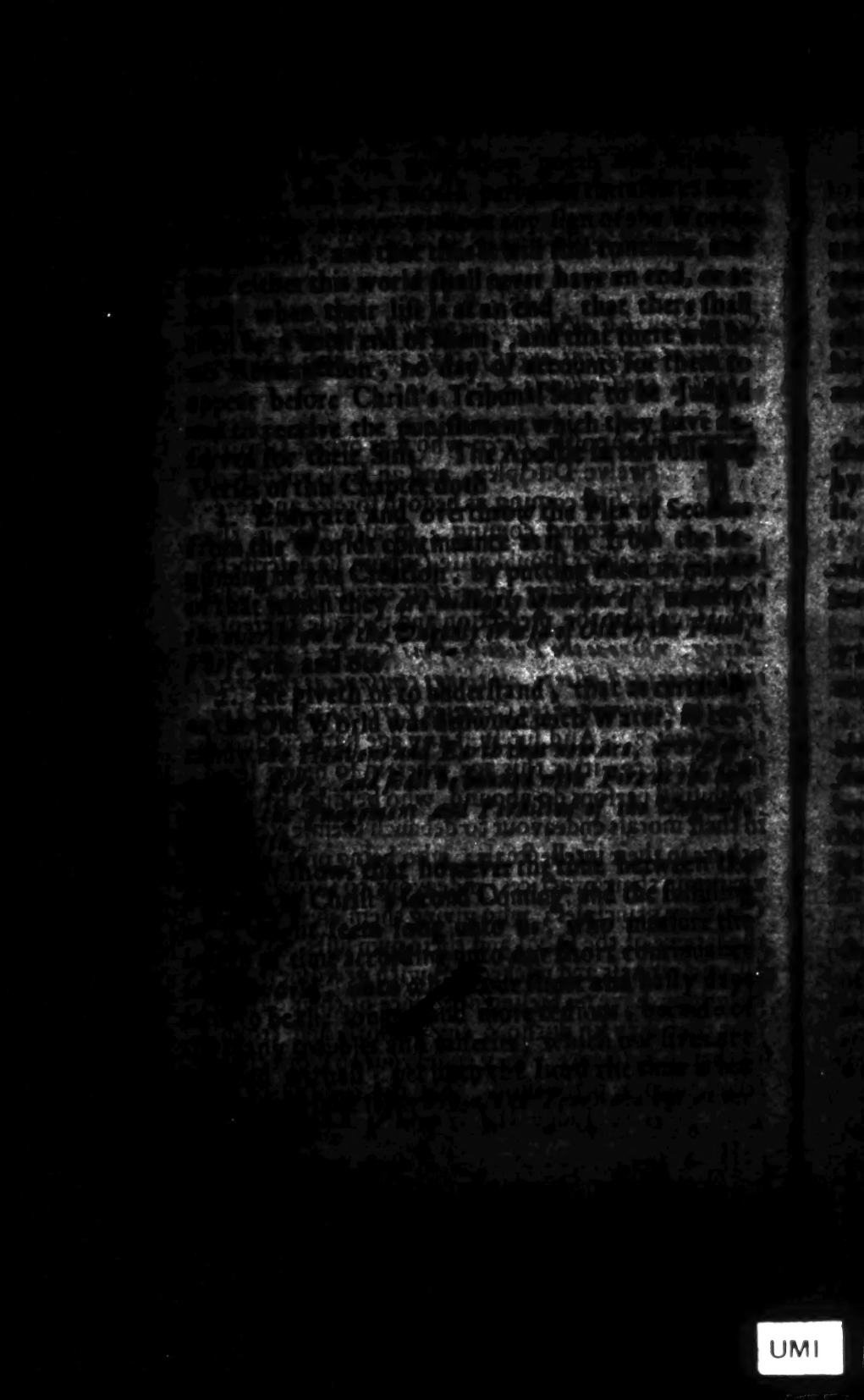
And the Escaping

OF

FUTURE BURNING

By THOMAS VINCENT, [illegible]

at Mendlow Mill-Street. [illegible]



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conformed after the Image of God in their hearts and affections; and so are reformed in their Lives and Conversations. *Rom.* 12. 2. If you be such as the Apostle describeth, *Ephes.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *Who are dead in Sins and Trespasses, who walk according to the course of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that worketh in the Children of disobedience, having your conversation in the lusts of the Flesh, fulfilling the desires of the Flesh, and of the mind,* or such as are described, *Tit.* 3. 3. *Who are foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy,* or any other course of wickedness, you may know assuredly, that for the present you are Ungodly; the first step to the attainment of godliness, is a clear and thorow conviction that you are without godliness.

2. Labour for a sense of the danger of Ungodliness, whilest you are Ungodly, you are in continual danger of unavoidable, unspeakable, unsupportable and eternal ruine and destruction in Hell; no condemned Malefactour is in more danger of being hang'd, than you whilst ungodly, who are condemned to burn in everlasting Fire, *John* 3. 18. *Mark.* 9. 43, 44. If death seizeth upon you whilst you are ungodly, you are lost irrecoverably; O think seriously, and think often that death hath you in pursuit every day, that Death may be very near, even ready to knock at your door, the next meat which you eat, may breed a disease within you, which shall soon put a conclusion to your days; the next time you go forth of your doors, some hidden and unexpected casualty may befal you and quickly cut off the thread of your life; the next Sin you commit

must be the finishing sin, which shall bring forth Death, Jam. 1. 15. And then think that your bodies shall not sooner be conveyed by your friends unto the pit of the grave, than your souls having received their doom from God, shall be drag'd by Devils unto the bottomless pit of Hell. Labour for an awakened Spirit through sense of your danger, whilst you are in an unconverted state.

3. Get a sense of Sin, not only as it is like to bring ruine upon your selves, but also as it is displeasing and dishonourable unto God; think whilst you are are ungodly, that you sin in every thing you do, yea, that do nothing else but sin against God; for whatever doth not proceed from a Sanctified principle is sinful, and therefore you being without this principle, all your actions must needs be transgressions. Think how highly God is offended with sin, think of the nature of your sins, the number of your sins, and the aggravations of your sins; think how your hearts have been defiled with your lusts, & how God hath been dishonoured; think of the Majesty, Power, Justice, and Holiness of God, whom by your sins you have affronted, and let this cause you to fear; and think of the mercy, grace, goodness and loving kindness of God, whom you have displeased by your sins, and let this cause you to grieve. I would advise that you would call your selves to an account for your sins, so far as you can remember, and make a Catalogue of your sins, with all their hainous circumstances; you may do it, if it be convenient, with your Pen, at least in your mind; and then spread the black Catalogue before the Lord in humble confessions, begging that the Lord would work your hearts unto godly sorrow, that God would

4. Labour for a ſenſe of your need of Chriſt, not only to deliver you from the guilt of ſin, but alſo to deliver you from the power of it; not only to ſave you, but alſo to ſanctifie you; be ſenſible of your need, not only of Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs, that you may be pardoned and accepted as perfectly righteouſneſs, but alſo of his imparted righteouſneſs, that you may be made in ſome meaſure inherently righteous. Look upon Chriſt not only as the example and Pattern of godlineſs, but alſo as the root and ſpring of it; be perſwaded of the truth and endeavour, fully to underſtand the meaning of that Scripture, *Col.* 1. 19. *It hath pleaſed the Father that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell*, that there is not only fulneſs of ſufficiency in Chriſt for himſelf, but alſo fulneſs of redundancy for us; that he is a full overflowing, and ever flowing Fountain of all ſorts of ſupplyes for us; be perſwaded that there is not only fulneſs of merit in Chriſt for your juſtification, but alſo that there is fulneſs of Spirit and Grace in Chriſt for our Sanctification, be perſwaded that all Spiritual Light and Life, it is derived from Jeſus Chriſt, *Eph.* 5. 14. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt and ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light.* And *John* 5. 21. *The Son quickneth whom he will.* Be perſwaded that it is only through Faith in Chriſt, that you can have an Intereſt in Chriſt, and ſhare in any of thoſe benefits, which he hath purchaſed, or doth convey, that it is through Faith in Chriſt not only that the perſon is juſtified, but alſo that the heart is purified, *Act.* 15. 9. Be ſenſible then of your need of Chriſt, and your need alſo of Faith in

[illegible] you unto Christ, that you may be quickned and renewed by him.

5. Acquaint your selves well with the Promises of the Covenant of Grace, and particularly those of renovation, of putting a new principle into us, of Gods working the first grace, such as *Jer.* 31. 33. *This is the Covenant that I will make with the House of* Israel, *after those days saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, & write it in their hearts, &c. Ezek.* 36. 25, 26, 27. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and all your Idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of Flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgements, and do them.* Such as are ungodly, may have encouragement to come unto Christ, and lay hold on his righteousness, whereby the ungodly are justified, *Rom* 4. 5. And such as are graceless may have encouragement to come unto God through Christ, and lay hold on the Promise of working the first grace, of giving a new heart, whereby they may be regenerated; and though you cannot do this of your selves, yet in your endeavour it is that the Lord by his Spirit doth work.

6. With your application of the Promises of the Covenant, which God hath made through Christ on his part, you must give up your selves in Covenant unto God on your part. Make choice of God for your God and Father; of Christ for your Advocate and Saviour, your Lord and Husband; of the Spirit for your Sanctifyer and Comforter, of the Word

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[illegible] Lastly, Conclude all with a few directions.

Quest. Wherein must we practice godliness?

Ans. This must be done in regard of the duties of of Gods immediate Worship; in regard of your works of Mercy; in regard of your natural actions; in regard of your recreations; and in regard of the works of your particular Callings.

First, In regard of the duties of Gods immediate Worship, you must practice godliness in your worshipping God more publickly in the assemblies of of Gods people; more privately in your Families, and more secretly in your Closets. In the exercise of all moral vertues, in all conditions, places, companies, times, and in all relations.

First, You must practice godliness in your publick Worship, in your right use of, and attendance upon publick Ordinances, such as hearing the Word, prayer unto God, praising of God, receiving the Sacrament, and the like.

1. Practice godliness in hearing the Word, which God hath appointed to be the means, not onely of conversion, but also of edification, and preparation of you, for the Heavenly Inheritance, *Act.* 20. 32. *And now Brethren I commend you unto God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance amongst all them that are Sanctified.* And if you would hear the Word aright so as to receive benefit by it, you must hear it with preparation, with reverence, with attention, with Faith, with affection, and follow it with a suitable conversation.

1. Hear the Word with preparation; take [illegible] that you [illegible] not [illegible] into Gods [illegible]

[illegible] Christ unto the Throne of Grace; *Eph.* 2. 18. *Eph.* 3. 12. *Heb.* 4. 16. And if you would pray aright, so as to have your prayers accepted and answered, you must pray with sincerity, with humility, with faith, with fervency, with importunity, and with perseverance, waiting upon the Lord also with patience for an answer.

1. Pray with sincerity, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart.* Be not like the hypocrites, spoken of by our Saviour, *Matt.* 6. 5. *Who pray that they may be seen of Men*; or as those, *Matt.* 23. 14. *Who for a pretence make long prayers.* The former who pray out of vain glory, and that they may receive praise from men, our Saviour telleth us, *They have their reward*; and the later who carry on some covetous, or other wicked design by their prayers, that *they shall receive the greater damnation.* Be sincere therefore, endeavour in your prayers to approve your selves unto God, let your design be Gods glory; seek in your prayers Gods favour and grace, communion with him, supplies from him, and all with a sincere respect unto his glory, as well as your own truest good.

2. Pray with humility; *God heareth the desire of the humble, Psal.* 10. 17. When God looketh upon *the proud a far off, he hath a respect unto the lowly, Psa.* 138. 9. *Be clothed therefore with Humility*, as the Apostle exhorts, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. when your appear before the highest Majesty in this duty of Prayer. Make confession of the sin of your nature, the sins of your hearts, and lives with humility, grief, shame, and self abhorrency; throw your selves down at Gods feet, and loath your selves in his sight; say with *Abraham, we are but dust and ashes*, *Gen.* 18. 27.

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With *Jacob*, *we are not worthy of the least of all thy Mercies*, Gen. 32. 10. With *Job*, *We abhor our selves*, Job 42. 6. With *David*, *so foolish were we and ignorant, even like Beasts before thee*, Psal. 73. 22. With *Agur*, *We are brutish, and have not the understanding of Men*, Prov. 30. 2.

3. Pray with Faith; by Faith make use of the name and Mediation of Christ in your prayers unto God, John 14. 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my Name, I will do it that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* By Faith apply and urge the Promises, which God hath made to prayer, & which God hath made unto Faith, Matth. 7. 7. *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you*, Jam. 5. 6. *If any of you lack Wisdom*, and the like may be said of any other grace or good thing, which God hath promised, *let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto him; but let him ask in Faith, &c.* Matth. 21. 22. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive.* And therefore you have encouragement to draw neer with full assurance of Faith, Heb. 10. 22. Labour for a true understanding of the meaning of the Promises, and you may accordingly with confidence apply and plead them at the Throne of Grace.

4. Pray with fervency; Jam. 5. 16. *The effectually fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.* Look to it that you be righteous through Christ's imputed and imparted righteousness; for first the person is accepted, and then the service; and look to it that your prayers be fervent, the fervent prayer is the effectual and prevailing prayer; let not your petitions freez, as it were, between your Lips, pro-

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deny you by the coldness and indifferency of your Spirits in asking; labour to fill up your desires unto fervency if you feel your hearts lukewarm, and cry to God for the breathings of his Spirit, to enkindle and blow up your affections into a flame.

5. Pray with importunity; knock importunately at the door of Mercy, and resolve there to lye, and there to cry untill you have an answer; wrestle with God at the Throne of Grace, hang about his arms, and resolve not to let him go without a blessing: fill your mouths with Arguments, and importunately plead with him, his Glory, his Power, his Love, his Word, his Truth, his Sons Blood and intercession, your need, and the like, and resolve to take no denial; and if you will not be denied, you shall not be denied; importunity will prevail when nothing else will do it: see the encouragement to importunity in three places, which would be too large to recite, but I desire you would read and consider them, *Luke* 11. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, &c. *Luke* 18. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *Matth.* 15. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

6. Lastly, Add unto your prayer perseverance, continue in the duty against all opposition and discouragement; and wait patiently upon the Lord in the diligent use of all other means, that you may in Gods time, which is the best time, and in Gods way, which is the best way; and in Gods manner, which is the fittest for you, obtain the things which you pray for, take the direction of the Apostle, *Eph.* 6. 18. *Praying always with all Prayer and*

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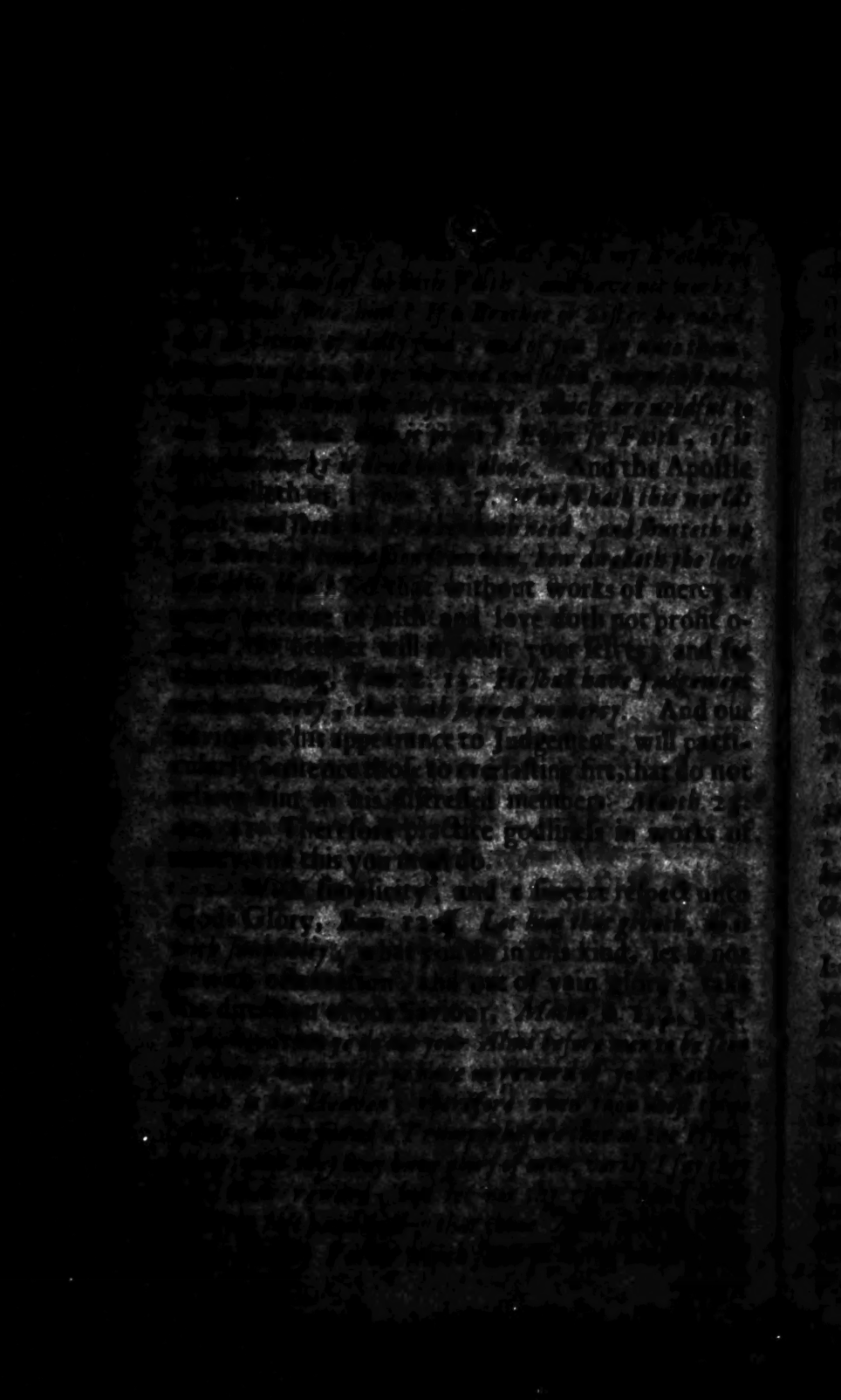

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